

No. 172 February 1990

# Hillandale

NEWS





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# The HILLANDALE News

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Patron OLIVER BERLINER
*
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Chairman PETER MARTLAND
Secretary CHARLES LEVIN
Treasurer D.M. FIELD
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THE LIFE OF A "HILLANDALE" EDITOR is not all beer and skittles. Champagne receptions launching successive Wimbledon Record Bazaars become tiresome after a year or so in the job, and even the social glitter of the London Meetings begins to pall, leaving only the hurly-burly of getting each edition "to bed", as we journalists say. Now, to my dismay, I find I have created a monster, the "Oops!" column, which seems set to become this journal's most eagerly contributed item. Not a day passes now without the arrival of yet more letters, all gleefully cataloguing sins and omissions scattered through the previous edition. All right, all right; Largs, dammit, LARGS, not Langs (on page 291). And for total confumbustication, see my note on the "Letters" page. Well, at least it proves people actually read the magazine. Finally, there comes today a missive from a distinguished predecessor, Christopher Proudfoot, going on about, oh, some trivial misprint or other. As it happens I haven't room for it now, but must hold it over until the April issue. I don't really mind being corrected, and least of all by Christopher who is privileged on two counts. Firstly, he is one of the few people apart from myself who have actually produced the magazine, and who know what that entails. Secondly, this February issue marks his very welcome return as a contributor. I know many members will share my pleasure to find him doubly-exposed; on page 328 and again on page 341. Apart from that there is now this, er, trivial matter lined up for April. Unless, of course, something more important comes in to crowd it out of the pages.

T.C.

Front cover: "Cedar" picture supplied by Robert Vickers, British Library National Sound Archive



AT THE CONCLUSION of their impressive three-part article "Record Processing for Improved Sound" (Hillandales 162 to 164, 1988) Adrian Tuddenham and Peter Copeland gave tantalising details of a new record processing system then in development, CEDAR (Computer Enhanced

Digital Audio Restoration). Now we are grateful to Gordon Reid, the man closest to CEDAR, for sending us this article. Gordon is General Manager of Cambridge Sound Restoration, the company which developed the system in association with the National Sound Archive.

## CEDAR

by Gordon Reid

**M**ANY OF THE FINEST MUSICAL PERFORMANCES ever heard pre-date the development of modern high-quality recording techniques. Although the reproduction quality of hi-fi systems has improved out of all recognition over the last twenty years, it has been impossible, until now, to go back to the masters of these classic recordings and improve the fidelity of the source material. In addition, the quality and longevity of recorded media have improved dramatically in the last few years. Early recordings are consequently marred by frustrating levels of background noise due to the inherent low quality and unavoidable deterioration of older media. This addition noise, which obscures much of the fine detail present in the original performance, affects all commercial releases of the recording, whether produced on 78 or Compact Disc.

### THE HISTORY OF CEDAR

Four years ago the British Library National Sound Archive decided to begin the transfer of their enormous collection of recordings to newer, more stable media.

Music stored on records and tapes deteriorates even if stored in ideal conditions. When a shellac record decays the whole surface of the disc can break up, and you are eventually left with nothing at all to play. Even in the early stages of decay, funguses eat into the surface causing significant surface noise and hiss. Tapes don't fare much better: the films become brittle, the oxides decay and, if badly stored, edges become damaged. And that's before you consider the action of moisture, and the flexing of the materials caused by changes in temperature and pressure. Clearly, you can store discs and tapes for only so long before they become useless, and for early 78s in particular that time is fast approaching.

The advent of digital recording techniques - optical discs as well as CDs and Digital Audio Tape (DAT) - meant that, for the first time, media were available which (in theory) would not deteriorate with time. The Archive therefore decided to investigate transcribing their collection onto these

new media, and also to use the opportunity to 'clean up' the material. They purchased a Neve desk with sophisticated digital filtering facilities, and a 'scratch reduce' facility, but this was unable to perform more than the most superficial cleaning up of material. Clearly the future lay elsewhere from the Neve, so the NSA approached the signal processing laboratory at the University of Cambridge. The University convinced them that a computer-based solution was required, although in 1986 there were some technological problems to be overcome. Since all material would be processed by computer it would need to be converted to a digital format, loaded, processed, unloaded, and finally played back as audio. The initial development of CEDAR was carried out using 12-bit A/D (analogue to digital format) and D/A (digital to analogue format) processors developed in Cambridge, but it was not until the advent of DAT that cheap 16-bit conversion and storage became available. The digitised material had to be loaded onto the hard disk of a computer, and an economical system was developed to take DAT (or A/D converter) output and transfer this, via a special processor, onto the hard disk of a Personal Computer.

Finally, CEDAR was going to require phenomenal computing power, power beyond the capabilities of even mini- and



main-frame computers. This scale of computer installation would have made CEDAR unviable. Who would pay the processing charges for a system running on a £1,000,000 computer? Early (and rather limited) versions of CEDAR took a little over 10 hours to process a single side of a 3-minute 78. It wasn't until February 1989 that a suitable microcomputer-based processor capable of handling over 50 million calculations per second became available. This enabled CEDAR to process a track in under one hour: still slow, but fast enough.

### CEDAR PROCESSING

The specification of CEDAR is that it should be able to remove unwanted noise and hiss from a recording but not interfere with the signal content in any way at all. Therefore it is not possible to use conventional filtering techniques, which will always act equally on both signal and unwanted noise. So CEDAR has to be able to differentiate between noise and signal.

CEDAR Audio have grouped all the different manifestations of noise into four broad categories. First, a recording is scanned for large disruptions such as gouges or even breakages in a record. Secondly, the signal content is analysed to identify extended surface noise. Next, the clicks and scratches characteristic of record wear are located. Finally, the hiss (white or 'coloured' noise) content of the recording is analysed. The first three of these categories are made up of individual events, but hiss is a continuous signal contained within the overall signal.

Consequently, CEDAR is constructed from four independent signal-processing building blocks, aimed at each of the specific classes of audio degradation. Within the four main processes there are many further sub-processes, which become progressively more specific to the elimination of a given type of audio degradation. This enables the CEDAR operator to apply a 'sharp tool' to the degradation, rather than hitting the audio material with the proverbial sledgehammer. We can consider each of

these areas in turn

### THUMPS

The large thumps caused by deep gouges in a disc, the peeling away of fragile shellac surfaces, the seam of an early cylinder, or a break in a record, sound like large but discreet scratches. However, if they are treated by simple scratch removal techniques an annoying 'pinging' sound remains. This is caused by the **consequences** of the thump (such as resonance in the record deck cartridge and arm) **remaining** after the initial event has been removed. Without the context of the thump these resonances are extremely distracting, and it may sound better to leave the recording untreated. CEDAR Audio have therefore developed a method for attaching the side effects to the original thump and then removing **both** degradations simultaneously. Even with this system, a poorly performed restoration will still leave a low frequency 'shadow', and early work reflects this. But current versions of CEDAR can remove thumps from most musical material and, even in ideal listening conditions, the listener need never know that the recording had been damaged in the first place. In addition, since no editing takes place, the precise timing of the music or sound-track is always preserved.

### SCRATCHES AND EXTENDED SURFACE NOISE

There have been many attempts in the past to remove clicks and scratches from old recordings. Both mechanical (reading the 'cleaner' side of a groove) and electronic (using delay lines and impulsive limiters) methods have been employed, and these usually succeed in removing some of the unpleasant effects of scratches.

Unlike thumps, with their associated problems, scratches are discreet events in a signal waveform. It would be relatively easy to remove all the clicks from material if no genuine signal ever imitated a scratch. Unfortunately, there

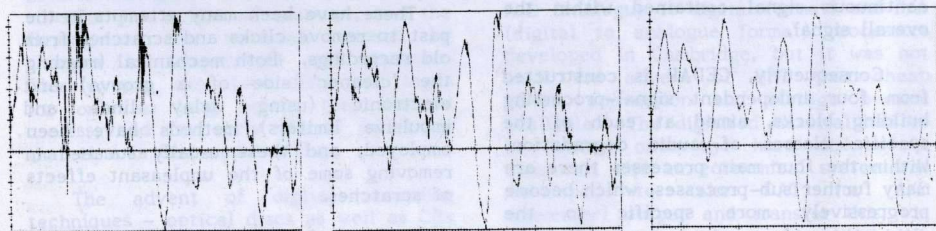


are many transient waveforms that, when viewed on a screen, look similar to scratches, but are nevertheless important constituents of the genuine musical signal. (An excellent example of this is the 'screech' trumpet of 1930s and 1940s jazz, which has an unbelievably 'scratchy' waveform). To separate signal from noise CEDAR scans the whole musical passage and then constructs a mathematical model of the signal: what events are contained, and what reasonable boundary conditions can be chosen for the ranges of these events. (Examples of boundaries are maximum and minimum dynamic range, rise times, frequency responses, etc.). The actual signal can then be compared with the model and a decision made regarding unusual events. If an event is determined to be anomalous it is then a straightforward matter to eliminate it.

However, some scratches last for appreciable times: 0.15 of a second is not unheard of, so there must be a mechanism to remove the scratch without causing a total break in the signal, or resulting in time compression. There are a number of ways to maintain a continuous signal after a chunk has been removed. They can be grouped into three broad categories: splicing, re-synthesis, and interpolation. Splicing, as its name suggests, involves cutting and pasting a section of signal into the gap caused by the scratch removal. The inserted section can be chosen from a number of sources and, if smoothed, will give a (mostly) glitch-free continuous signal. However, there will often be a loss of high frequencies (due to the smoothing) and, in any case, the

method is ethically unsatisfactory. Re-synthesis is a better, but far more complicated method, requiring the construction of an artificial signal ('carved' from white noise) to fill the gap. This is real Honours Degree Maths stuff, so we will move on to . . . Interpolation. This involves looking at either side of a gap in a signal and asking the question: If THIS happened before the scratch, and THAT happened after the scratch, what signal 'events' MUST have happened in the intervening time for THIS to have become THAT. Simple in principle, interpolation is fiendishly difficult to implement, because a musical signal doesn't follow simple mathematical rules. Not with a 104-piece orchestra, natural reverberation, equalisation, and studio enhancement, it doesn't!

CEDAR's approach to scratch removal is based on using each of these methods, or even a combination of them, where most appropriate. CEDAR has to deal with some very old and badly degraded material. The maximum number of scratches yet encountered is over 2,500 in one second of music. The random nature of the clicks, in time, intensity, and duration, creates a sound just like bacon frying. As the number of scratches and their amplitudes increase, the 'bacon' eventually dominates the whole output. In theory there will eventually be very little signal left, other than the noise of the scratches. But even 2,000 discreet clicks in a second of material can still leave up to 96% of the signal information intact, and CEDAR can handle this level of degradation very effectively.



Three printouts of 1/44th of a second of signal taken from a damaged '78'

[1] Original signal taken from the disc, showing the full scale of the scratches as well as hiss and other broadband noise. [2] Descratched version of (1). Note the jaggedness due to high frequency noise. [3] Fully treated signal following de-scratch and noise removal. Note the retention of some high frequencies, a part of the genuine signal.



## BROADBAND NOISE

The challenges presented by hiss removal are some of the most important areas of current signal processing research. Unlike modern recordings, which can be made with very low noise, an aged recording cannot 'shed' its hiss using conventional techniques. It is no good applying Dolby 'SR' or DBX to reduce tape hiss if the material recorded onto the tape contains its own noise. So CEDAR has to attack the noise at source. After all, if a relatively noise-free digital master can be made from the CEDAR restoration, subsequent copies of the material will only suffer from the noise associated with the modern playing medium - not from the hiss originally recorded in 1940.

Noise, unlike thumps and scratches, is caused by the presence of random amounts of random frequencies in addition to the information contained within the genuine signal. If high frequencies predominate you will hear hiss; if low frequencies, you hear rumble. Unfortunately for the restorer, the noise is part of the continuous audio signal, and cannot be differentiated in the way that scratches and clicks can. If a hissy signal is viewed on the screen the noise components are indistinguishable from the genuine sound content.

The major problem for any restoration system, irrespective of the processing method employed, is therefore always the same: how to remove the unwanted noise without eating into the music. Compression will always occur if the signal is down-graded in any way, and yet it is a physical property of sound that whenever a signal subtraction occurs it is impossible to remove 100% of the noise but leave 100% of the desired sound behind. Consequently all previous attempts at noise removal have failed to limit the signal reduction to just the unwanted noise, and have thus suffered from serious amplitude and frequency compression.

One of the innovations of CEDAR is a unique method for determining the amplitude of noise frequencies at any time throughout a recording. Given that CEDAR can accurately track the changing

noise characteristics, it can then adapt its reductive processes accordingly. Degradation such as surface noise (which can be inaudible one moment and intolerable the next) can be tracked and the noise reduction dynamically tailored as appropriate. Since it is impossible to avoid removing some small fraction of the original signal during the noise removal procedure, the 'trick' is to maximise noise reduction and minimise any damage to the signal. (Don't throw the baby out with the bath-water.) Unfortunately the actual mechanics of the subtractive processes are covered by world-wide patents and cannot be described here.

CEDAR believe that the final result of processing can only be judged by listening. They have found that some customers require severe noise reduction, even if this leads to 3 or 4dB of compression, whilst other clients prefer to sacrifice noise reduction to ensure that there is no limitation of the signal. Consequently, much processing time is spent matching the restoration parameters to a given customer's requirements. Nevertheless, the subject of compression should not be dwelt upon too heavily since CEDAR is proving to be remarkable at removing noise and hiss whilst maintaining the ambience and warmth of a recording. Unfortunately, tracks may sometimes not be fully restorable because the quality of the input material is extremely poor. On these occasions a customer will be offered a partial restoration, and supplied with a number of differently processed samples. It is then up to him to decide whether any of the offered compromises are acceptable.

## THE APPLICATIONS FOR CEDAR

The range of applications for a system such as CEDAR is impressive. It has now been applied to individual tracks and excerpts, complete CD mastering, international archive material, unpublished demo and practice tapes, and even samples for use in studios. But another area that is being rapidly revolutionised by digital technology is that of films and video. We are becoming accustomed to computer-generated graphics, both in new work and re-processed film. (You may be



acquainted with the recent attempts to re-colour black and white films such as Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis'. In a much wider context, many old films are deteriorating rapidly and will be transferred to newer media to be preserved for future audiences. The optical transfer can be easily accomplished using modern video techniques, but until now the sound has been on a 'warts and all' basis. CEDAR can greatly increase the value of newer prints by removing optical soundtrack problems and noise introduced by earlier, inferior, copying processes.

### THE PRACTICALITIES

CEDAR restoration is now performed by a subsidiary of Cedar Audio Ltd. called Cambridge Sound Restoration. This bureau is available for anyone to use - private collector, archivist, or record, TV, film and video company. Material is usually supplied on DAT but via the National Sound Archive CEDAR can offer one of the most accurate transcription services in the UK for customers who wish to supply discs and tapes to them. The NSA can handle most forms of sound medium, including all sizes of 78s, cylinders, LPs, 45s, cassettes, spool tape, CDs, DAT and PCM formats.

Where possible, Cambridge Sound Restoration prefer to work with a dry recording, free of electronic enhancements such as reverb. If the processed material is scheduled for re-release these treatments can be applied after restoration to much greater effect. Material supplied for restoration should also include all lead-in noise and disc or tape run-out. This enables CEDAR to make the best use of all the information regarding the original recording conditions.

There are as many perceptions of "the right sound" as there are listeners, so it is important that the CEDAR engineers understand the customer's exact requirements. Just to make everything as difficult as possible, UK clients tend to aim for relative restoration (i.e., how much better is it than it was before processing) whilst

overseas customers tend to impose an absolute measure of quality (i.e., it's a fantastic improvement and you've obviously worked very hard, but it's still too noisy to release so we're not going to pay you . . .). To minimise problems the CEDAR bureau in Cambridge welcomes customers' input at all stages of restoration.

### AND THE RESULT?

The acid test - just how good is a CEDAR restoration? The answer has to be - sometimes good, but sometimes fantastic. Cambridge Sound Restoration produce a demonstration DAT which highlights each of the restoration processes. To hear a broken, scratchy and hissy '78' transformed into a clear, bright recording is astounding. Other demonstrations on the DAT include noise removal on a damaged optical soundtrack, full restoration of a number of other 78s, and hiss removal on a selection of 1940s and 1950s master tapes. Each restoration, taken from work sent in by customers, is preceded by the original track. Many of the demo tracks have now been released, or are scheduled for release, on CD.

Although CEDAR has many further abilities based on sophisticated digital audio filtering and other manipulations, Cambridge Sound Restoration make a point about not making judgements as to how a recording 'should' have sounded. The philosophy of CEDAR audio processing is to restore musical material to its original recorded quality. No attempt is made to compensate for effects such as wow and flutter which may be a consequence of the state of development of recording equipment available at the time of performance, or to add modern enhancements such as equalisation and artificial ambience. What CEDAR produces is as accurate a recreation of how the material actually sounded on the day it was recorded as it is currently possible to make.

CEDAR Audio are currently developing additional processes to remove certain types of distortion as well as to compensate for the frequency limitations of early gramophone recording systems.



Early tests on the algorithms have been quite successful, but it will be some time before these services will be available to customers.

### SO, WHO'S USING CEDAR?

CEDAR is now capable of processing both mono and stereo material, with a maximum track length of two hours. A two hour stereo track requires 2,160,000,000 individual calculations to process. That is over 300 million calculations per second of material. The very latest developments of CEDAR have placed the system at the current pinnacle of audio restoration. In particular, a 'Real Time' noise removal system has now been commercially implemented. This means that the audio engineer can listen to the restored signal as the original is being played. He can then select the most satisfactory restoration parameters as he listens, checking the sound quality as the track progresses. Performing the final restoration is then trivial - simply rewind the tape, start the computer, and record the output onto another DAT machine. This development, amongst others, has even led Philips to place an initial order with CEDAR. If they process with a CEDAR restoration schedule they will join some prestigious company indeed. CBS currently have 10 CDs in process, and we will soon hear musicians such as Cab Calloway, Bix Beiderbecke, Les Brown, and Benny Goodman with CEDAR clarity. Reader's Digest will have their first CEDAR box set ("The Bing Crosby Years") on the market by the time you read this, and it will include a restored Glen Miller concert. Denon Columbia have 25 CDs of Japanese popular music (1925-1952) on order, and smaller companies, both at home and abroad, such as PRT Records, Simax, and Grosvenor Records (with a George Formby CD) have enjoyed the results of restoration.

### CONCLUSIONS

Garbage In, Garbage Out, is a common phrase in computing, and it applies just as much to audio restoration. Many recordings are transcribed poorly, record decks are poorly set up, tape

machines have dirty heads, azimuth errors, poor speed stability . . . and these are just the ones in professional studios. CEDAR certainly cannot make a bad recording sound good, but a good recording buried in noise can be improved to a degree unthinkable only a few years ago.

Current restoration charges are about £150 for a single track and £1,400 for a CD master. Compared to perhaps £100 per hour for the use of a digital mastering studio these costs are very reasonable, even within the reach of more affluent private customers.

For the future, the falling price of technology makes all things possible, and a domestic CEDAR system is already being discussed. However, the price of a CEDAR processing system is currently about £13,000 and although high technology prices have dropped considerably over the last five years, it will be quite a time before £13,000 turns into £130. Until the computer industry can produce the technology that is required, and produce it cheaply enough to bring the price down by a factor of 100, we are not going to see CEDAR built into domestic equipment. Nevertheless CEDAR Audio are optimistic that such a development is not too far away, and they hope to offer real-time restoration to record companies and production studios in the not too distant future. This will be followed by the pro and semi-pro markets, and finally the home consumer. When such a product is developed, CEDAR will certainly be at the head of the field. Unfortunately, too often, a world-beating device has been a British development, only for the USA and Japan to overtake the UK after a few years. It is to be hoped that CEDAR Audio can stay the course. They are certainly a long way ahead of the field.

For further information please contact  
Cambridge Sound Restoration, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Cambridge CB2 3RE.  
Tel: [REDACTED]

Parts of this article have previously appeared in the magazine "Music Technology" published by Music Maker Publications, and they have been printed here with their permission.





# Pathé Records in Britain

PART 3

by LEN WATTS & FRANK ANDREWS

EDISON ENTHUSIASTS will be familiar with the Miller Losh organ, built in the USA especially for Edison recording purposes. It has been discovered that Pathé, too, arranged for a special organ to be built for its recording studio by The Positive Organ Company. The pipes may have been at the back of the organ, facing the recording machine. Possibly something similar happened at The Gramophone Company for the composer Easthope Martin to make organ records for HMV. Pathé engaged the organist from St. Margaret's, Westminster, a youthful Reginald Goss Custard, to make 12 sides for them. Acoustic organ records are very few: the only other organists to appear on Pathé discs were William Ditcham (late of Sterling records), F.R. Kinkee, and E. St. George Pett (who was he?)

1914 saw Pathé in court once more, this time to obtain a perpetual injunction against unspecified manufacturers marketing talking machines called Coronet, Orpheus, Mikado, Romeo, and Carmen. These were registered trade marks for machines made by Pathé. By May 1914 perhaps

trade was falling off, judging by an advertisement which appeared offering 100,000 soundboxes to be given away, one to every first-time purchaser of six records. In the USA 20" records were still being advertised but, as stated earlier, they seem to have quietly disappeared in England. Towards the latter part of 1914 when Britain was at war, Pathé was still vigorously adver-

tising, exhorting customers to "buy as usual", and with the war in mind a "Patriotic List" was brought out. One record in particular was having its profits allocated to the Prince of Wales' Fund (in common with other makes of record).

For a short period Pathé Discs took on a different appearance. Why this happened has not been discovered, but it is evident they were made by a subcontractor. They were a full 12" in diameter and had a small "land" between the raised rim and the grooves. Also, instead of the

engraved label they had a very neat gold printed glossy black paper label. Their envelopes were of brown paper,



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goes into the home with the Pathéphone. The children revel in the songs and jokes of the great mirth-makers—dance and march to the music of the finest bands and orchestras—sit as spell-bound listening to the glorious singing and playing of the world's greatest vocalists and instrumentalists.

... The wonder and delight of children as they listen to the "man in the box"—as they listen to the voices coming out, pure, true, and natural as life—is a high compliment and tribute to the absolute perfection of recording and reproduction reached by Pathéphones and Pathé Discs.

... If there are children you love—if you have children of your own—bring into their lives the added brightness which comes with the Pathéphone; cultivate their taste for true music so that this taste will have a lasting fine influence on their natures and throughout their lives. The

# Pathéphone

is the greatest Home Entertainer—bringing music and mirth for everyone—something for every age, every mood and taste, every occasion. To-day, no home is really complete without a Pathéphone.

... The Pathéphone renders with a full, rich tone, and reproduces the real "personality" of the singer and entertainer—every touch and expression of the instrumentalist. When the Pathéphone plays, it is as if the Artists were there—in your room. The wonderful Pathé Multitone Sound-Box enables you to vary the pitch of tone to suit the record and your taste. The Pathé permanent Sapphire Point obviates all bother. You just play one record after another—

## No Needles to Change ————— No Bother



The "Success" ... .. £5 5s.

Pathéphones are made in many styles, hornless and otherwise, at prices ranging from 42/-. Pathé Discs are the most moderate in price, and last ten times as long as needle-played discs. They are double-sided—two records on each; three sizes—10 in., 2 -; 11 in., 3 -; 14 in., 4 -.

Obtainable of Music Dealers throughout the world. In case of difficulty, write us for name of nearest Agent, Catalogues, and Lists of Records. Please mention "Evening News Dolls' Fund Souvenir."

*PATHE FRÈRES PATHÉPHONE LIMITED . . . LONDON, W.C.*

Illustration (November 1912) by courtesy of Steve Paget



not the familiar pink or brown felt paper. Indications are that they were sub-contracted to C.R. Johnston, who was with Marathon Records as recording engineer. These Pathé discs bear his mark of a cross in a circle under the label.

During 1915, in spite of the war, overseas trade was still being vigorously pursued. Dance records were being imported from America and the American business was being developed by Emile and Jacques Pathé in conjunction with Russell Hunting. Dance numbers were claimed to have been recorded (in New York) under the direction of Vernon and Irene Castle, American dance champions.

Another price-cut was implemented in September 1915. The 10" disc was reduced from 2s.0d (10p) to 1s.6d (7½p). It may be remembered that the 8½" disc cost 1s.6d, but these were phased out towards the end of 1910 with the highest number at 1535. At this time wholesale prices of records to dealers were: 10", 1s.0d (5p); 11", 1s.10d (9p); and 14" 2s.6d (12½p). Pathé's world-wide superintendent of recording, Russell Hunting, was repeating a role he made famous on cylinder records in the nineties, that of Michael Casey. "Casey Home from the Front" was one of six sides he made for Pathé at this time.

During 1916 the aforementioned Sidney P. Turner and an associate, one Denville Simonds, late of the Edison business in

London, founded a company that produced a record called Diamond Double Discs, with offices at 81 City Road, London. Their records were essentially similar to Pathé's (and were in fact pressed by Pathé), but they were edge-start and 10½" diameter. The label was engraved and filled in with sky-blue paint. The repertoire was taken from Pathé in many cases, although some new recordings did appear. Many pseudonyms were used; for example Thomas Malin (banjo) which covered both John Pidoux and Burt Earle. George Baker appeared as Bingley Shaw, and William Boland was called Arnold Wilson. A comedian who shall remain nameless appeared on Diamond as Laffan B. Merry. For a reason difficult to imagine the Garde Républicaine Band was labelled as Midland Silver Prize Band, but some orchestras whose homelands were now in the enemy's camp were lumped together under Royal Court Orchestra.

The two gentlemen mentioned earlier, Sidney P. Turner and Denville Simonds, had been responsible a year or two earlier for the Saphone machine, using mostly Pathé motors and always Pathé soundboxes. Pathé agreed to catalogue and distribute Diamond Discs, but the Diamond Company was to remain separate and publish its own catalogues.

In 1916 Pathé were still making





centre-start discs, and claimed over 50,000 records in their repertoire. Pathéphones and records were being given free to the soldiers in the trenches.

Towards the middle of 1916 Pathé absorbed Diamond Disc Record Ltd. and continued to publish them until 1918. By that time they had a paper label of similar design to the engraved label, but now called "Pathé Diamond Record". One may assume that these late Diamond records were pressed in England at West Drayton, because the quality is rather poor and similar to the first "Rooster" records, to which we shall come shortly. In spite of the war Pathé were negotiating for premises in Britain to manufacture their goods. The much-travelled Russell Hunting was expected back from China! The trade mark of a cock standing on a record was registered in Britain.

The North London Phonograph and Gramophone Society (President Henry Seymour) at their August 1916 meeting, heard the entire opera "Romeo and Juliet", by Gounod, on Pathé discs played on Pathéphones loaned by Pathé Frères.

By October 1916 the Belgian factory's facilities had been lost to Pathé in London, having been captured by the Germans. The French factory's facilities were also lost, commandeered by the French Government for the production of armaments and ammunition. Pathé had no option but to continue searching for a suitable British factory. By March 1917 premises were found at West Drayton, Middlesex, where the installation of plant and machinery was soon in progress.

The abandonment of the centre-start disc probably occurred at the time when Pathé Frères Pathéphone Ltd. absorbed Diamond Disc Record Ltd. in 1916. Pathé's stamper numbers had passed the 93000 mark by 1913: they consisted of a small number with letters at the six-o'clock position on the 'label', and presumably started at number one, although 3500 is the lowest seen by your authors, on one of the aforementioned "concrete" discs. In 1914 a new system was inaugurated, with the stamper numbers starting at (14)-1. In 1915 the numbers began again at (15)-1. A few

discs only have been found with numbers starting at (16)-1 and as no discs have been encountered with numbers in a (17)-1 series this goes to support the notion that the centre-start discs were discontinued at the time mentioned.

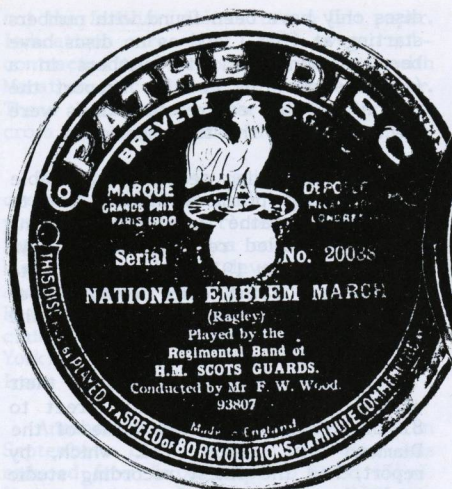
The continuing search for suitable manufacturing premises induces one to believe that Pathé were then suffering from a curtailed records output. An advertisement in 1917 with reference to centre-start Pathé discs would appear to have been merely to do with the selling off of old stocks.

In March 1917 Pathé moved their offices from Lamb's Conduit Street to 81 City Road, the former home of the Diamond Disc Record Ltd. which, by report, had the finest recording studio in London. At this time old machines and cabinets were being disposed of at clearance prices in Holborn, London W.C.1 (first use of the new post-code) presumably at Gamages' department store.

A firm, Cooper Brothers Ltd., were advertising 5,000 cylinder reproducers (soundboxes) and 100,000 mica and glass diaphragms of all sizes. The West Drayton factory was in full swing and capable of 2,500 records daily, or 5,000 with a night shift. The manager was A.E. Beckett, who had been eight years with Barnett Samuel and Sons Ltd. and then five years with Pathé at their Regent Street showrooms, after which he had been assistant to Russell Hunting.

From 15th November 1917 Pathé records would be known as "Roosters", and have a paper label in black and gold, bearing a cockerel coloured to denote price category: white 3s.0d, red 5s.0d, and gold 7s.6d. (15p, 25p, and 37½p). All records were 29 cm diameter. The Diamond Records incorporated in this Rooster catalogue were increased from 1s.6d to 2s.0d (7½p to 10p) and later to 3s.0d. Most of the Rooster records were simply a remastering of the old centre-start discs, but some were new. A few were unique to this short-lived "Rooster" label, notably the fabulously rare piano records of Edouard Risler. The numbering of the "Rooster" records





The "Rooster" label



The "Scroll" label

began at 20,000, the only five-figure Pathé series in Britain. They finished at 20896: only one or two remain untraced as to their contents. The labels had the words "PATHE DISC" in large white block capitals around their tops.

The complete opera "Rigoletto" was advertised at £3.0s.0d. The equivalent Columbia version was £4.8s.0d (£4.40). Two months later it was decided that the white Rooster discs were too low in price: they were increased to 4s.0d, and the Diamond Record to 3s.0d.

April 1918 saw a new recording engineer appointed, one G.C. Hallett, who was reported to have made successful organ recordings (although what is extraordinary about this? Goss Custard had made recordings five years previously and before that there had been Kinkee and Ditcham).

In December 1918 a new machine catalogue was issued. Pathé apologised through the press for a series of misfortunes and difficulties which had hindered output at West Drayton, and promised customers that things would now be normal: all outstanding orders would be executed promptly.

By mid-1919 Pathé's American business

was prospering. This was when they introduced the "Actuelle" machine. On 1st July control of Pathé Frères Pathéphone Ltd. (the British company) passed into the hands of Pathé Frères Phonograph Company of New York. Their President, A.E. Widmann, had been to Europe and had arranged with French Pathé to handle all products for the Western hemisphere, including Great Britain and its colonies. Emile and Jacques Pathé were to act as London managers.

The "Rooster" label was now abandoned and a new design appeared called the "Scroll" label. It had a red cockerel and the inscription "Pathé Frères Pathéphone Ltd." in a cartouche around the top half of the label. In small print was "Made in England for distribution in British Empire only". The equivalent American label had "For U.S. consumption only". The title was now in a panel on the lower half of the label. This panel was shaped like a parchment scroll; hence the term "scroll label". The scroll alone was coloured to represent the status of the performer and the price of the record, thus: black, 4s.6d; red, 6s.6d; buff, 7s.6d; blue, 10s.6d; white, 12s.6d: (22½p, 32½p, 37½p, 52½p, and 62½p respectively). This was a departure from Pathé's



earlier policy of pricing records solely on diameter, regardless of the artist's status. These scroll labels were called "size 12" although they were still only 29 cm. diameter. Soon there was to be a "size 10" in two categories: black at 3s.0d and red at 4s.0d. There were a few ex-Diamond records with Pathé scroll labels stuck over them. They were 10½" diameter, but the real Pathé discs were 10" (yes! 25 cm.)

The numbering of the "scroll" labelled discs began at 1000 for the 10" and 5000 for the 12" size. Although first issued in 1919, these scroll records began suffering deletions from the catalogue by September 1921 and, as already mentioned with reference to the centre-start 11" discs, the catalogue numbers of the deleted "scrolls" were used again for new releases, although not on so large a scale as the pre-war records. The numbers 10 to 999 (that is, only 990 numbers) had covered for an actual 1,455 discs! The 12" scroll labels, with 799 numbers (5000 to 5798) covered for 850 discs.

Plans were afoot to enlarge the West Drayton premises. Vastly improved talking machines were promised, and Jacques Pathé was embarking on a great advertising campaign.

A.E. Beckett had now been with Pathé as Sales Manager for ten years, and a Mr. Vyner was in charge of the Copyright Department. Charles Hill was in charge of recording; he had been with Pathé for eleven years, and was responsible for engaging artists and selecting music to be recorded. The song-writer Kennedy Russell was engaged as Musical Director. Pathé appear to have been doing reasonably well after the war.

The West Drayton factory was extensively modernised even though only two years old. All Pathé products for Britain would henceforth be manufactured here. There were, too, new showrooms at 81 City Road, London. During February 1920 Pathé were exhibiting at the British Industries Fair at the Crystal Palace, showing four new cabinet machines, two table grands and one hornless machine. All were equipped with the "Playall" soundbox to play both lateral and vertical-cut records. It had a double

elbow: by slackening a thumbscrew the soundbox could be turned sideways for needle-cut records and forward for phono-cut.

Tito Schipa and Yvonne Gall had been engaged to record on an exclusive basis. Eaton B. Baxter was engaged to be Advertising Manager: he had held similar positions with HMV and Zonophone. Due to post-war building restrictions imposed by the Government, Pathé were not allowed to extend their factory at West Drayton, so the American company - remember, they were in control - started looking for alternative premises. They found a suitable place in a modern fireproof concrete building at Stonebridge Park, London N.W.10. Here Pathé remained until they were absorbed by Columbia in 1928, when the premises were sold to British Homophone. The factory occupied a site of 7 acres.

By August 1920 the Actuelle machine was ready for shipment to dealers. It was a curious machine incorporating a large paper cone diaphragm instead of the usual soundbox and tonearm. A Pathéphone No.16 was also ready. The Rooster trade mark had now been in the field for 25 years since Pathé had set up business as manufacturers of phonographs in August 1895.

In November 1920 four more top artists were secured: Jacques Thibaud (violin), Luigi Montesanto (baritone), Emma Calvé (soprano), and Paul Franz (tenor). The move to Stonebridge Park was now complete, and both the West Drayton and City Road premises had been vacated. A contemporary advertisement for the Calvé and Franz records is the first to show the Stonebridge Park address.

By June 1921 the Belgian factory had been restored after its destruction by the Germans, and was now working to full capacity. The Louis Weill method of language instruction was advertised, the French course being on 52 double-sided records, size 12, at 5s.0d (25p per disc, or the complete set for £12.0s.0d.

\*\*\*\*\* To Be Concluded \*\*\*\*\*



# HENRY HALL

PIONEER OF BBC LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

**H**ENRY HALL, CBE, one of the great names from the golden age of British radio, died on October 28, aged 91. Bandleader, pioneer of the chat show and impresario, he will be above all remembered as a great wireless personality whose influence on light entertainment is still felt today.

Though the enormous impact his radio broadcasts had in living rooms throughout the land may be difficult for the television generation to appreciate, a growing trend in musical nostalgia saw the re-release of several of his earlier recordings. His novelty recording of "The Teddy Bears' Picnic" sold a million and is still available today.

He became a national figure when in 1932 he was invited by Lord Reith to succeed Jack Payne as director of the BBC Dance Orchestra - to the scepticism of rival West End bandleaders; but he survived them in a show business career which spanned 50 years.

Most other dance band conductors of the time tended to develop an almost wildly extrovert style: they were as eager to startle and amuse with gimmicks as to entertain with music. But Hall was primarily a musician, whose attitude to the dance music of the 'thirties was more purist than that of his originally more celebrated contemporaries. When he became the BBC's resident dance-band leader, Hall, with a nucleus of one or two, auditioned young men from the Trinity College of Music. He was after high standards.

In an interview with Radio Times, Hall said "Reith was a stickler for propriety. We always played in electric-blue uniforms even though no-one could see us. When I was invited to play at the Royal Variety Performance in 1934, I had to ask his permission. He gave it, but he insisted on hearing the 20 minute programme we were to play. We assembled in the studio and he came and sat, an audience of one."

Hall's arrival coincided with the BBC's move from its original Savoy Hill

home to Broadcasting House. In his long-running radio show, **Henry Hall's Guest Night**, he turned a hesitant microphone manner to advantage so that the halting delivery of his catch-phrase, "This IS Henry Hall speaking", became as famous as his signature tune, "Here's to the Next Time".

Born in London, Henry Robert Hall was a working class boy whose early enthusiasm for music took him to work in the music department of the Salvation Army. He arranged music for brass band and added some compositions of his own to the repertoire. After army service in the First World War, he went into music hall, forming, as pianist, a variety act with two other musicians. But it was unsuccessful and he changed course again and studied piano at the Guildhall School of Music.

His introduction to the flourishing world of the inter-war dance bands came at the Midland Hotel, Manchester, where he took over as pianist as a Christmas relief and made an immediate impression. By 1924 he was music director of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway's hotels and in charge of 32 bands.

He broadcast in this role and appeared at Gleneagles Hotel, Perthshire, the Midland in Manchester and the Adelphi in Liverpool. He was one of the first bandleaders to introduce his sessions with a signature tune.

His LMS salary was £5,000 a year, a fabulous sum in those days, but he accepted the BBC offer at £2,000 less. The chance of pioneering attracted him. At the BBC, Hall's quieter style came as a sharp contrast to the flamboyant display of Jack Payne but it was no less popular and he ran the BBC Dance





Orchestra for five years before deciding to go freelance. He introduced some of the biggest song hits of the day and also started probably the first BBC chat show with **Henry Hall's Guest Night**, which ran for 972 editions and featured every major artist over more than 20 years. It was Boat Race day 1934 and Henry Hall and the BBC Dance Orchestra were in the Columbia studios with music hall stars Elsie and Doris Waters, Anona Winn, Lupino Lane and Flanagan and Allen. He suggested they turn up for his next broadcast. Nothing was scripted but it proved such a success that the public demanded more, and his "Guest Night" became a fixture which subsequently featured Noël Coward, Gracie Fields, Laurel and Hardy, Bob Hope and Danny Kaye among others.

Hall was immensely popular, receiving at one stage 35,000 letters a year and making eight broadcasts a week. **Henry Hall's Guest Night** lasted, on and off, for

some 20 years. Hall was a shrewd spotter of talent, and helped to further the careers of several future stars, such as Beryl Reid, though he failed to recognise the potential of the young Vera Lynn. There were Royal Command performances, films, and, during the war, hundreds of morale boosting troop concerts and shows in factories all over Britain. Later, as an impresario, he was responsible for many successful West End shows, including the productions of *Annie Get your Gun*, and *High Button Shoes*. He also appeared as presenter on many radio and television shows.

His autobiography, **Here's to the Next Time**, offered a modest and likeable account of a career which was marked by solid professionalism and ability to gauge popular taste. He leaves a son and daughter.

\*\*\*\*\*

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PORTSMOUTH  
HAMPSHIRE  
PO7 6LR

ed Cunningham,  
ditor, Hillandale News,  
[redacted]  
grove Park,  
London SE12 9PA

Dear Sir,

When shopping in Chichester recently I noticed a portable gramophone in a shop window display. Initially it appeared to be an HMV 101 but on closer examination it had the winding handle projecting from the front of the case and not the side (there was no blocked up winding hole). It also lacked the used needle drawer but it had a metal used needle holder, with two flaps, fastened under the back of the lid. In all other respects it was the same as the 101, down to the HMV transfer. Could you help me identify it, since I thought that the 101, the 102, and the 99 were the only portables of that type ever made by the Gramophone Company.

Yours faithfully,

*I. Barnes*  
Ian Barnes

## 101 Interesting Things

by CHRISTOPHER PROUDFOOT

**N**OT ALL 101's ARE WOUND at the side. I commend to Mr. Barnes' notice the catalogue of the Society's 1977 exhibition, 100 YEARS OF RECORDED SOUND, where this first version is illustrated on page 35. There is also a description of two other models he has not come across, the 100 and the 97.

In 1925 the Gramophone Company was faced with the need for new gramophones to play the electrical recordings which were quietly filtering into the catalogue. The existing models had changed very little in over ten years and, indeed, apart from the Pleated Diaphragm of 1924, there had been no significant development in the acoustic design of the company's gramophones since 1905. To take account of the new theory of matched impedance, a new system had to be devised, and, for reasons of both speed and economy, it had to fit existing cases.

all the cabinet and table grand models as well as the portable (itself announced only just over a year previously) appeared with a totally new sound system. Externally they all appeared identical to the supplanted models. The system consisted of the No.4 soundbox, a narrow-bore swan-neck tone-arm, and a long folded horn. In the portable, Model 101, it was coiled round the motor and emerged at the back of the motor-board. The sound was thus projected up into the forward-sloping lid, which formed an essential part of the acoustic design.

So it was that, in the autumn of 1925,

The motor, as on the 100, was the





# THE *NEW* GRAMOPHONE



## Model 101

(PORTABLE)



Height (closed)  $11\frac{1}{4}$  in.

Width . . .  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in.

Length . . .  $16\frac{1}{4}$  in.

Fittings : Nickel-Plated  
and Enamel

**SIR EDWARD ELGAR, O.M.**, says : "The most important invention in the history of the Gramophone."

### MODEL 101

PORTABLE

£7 : 0 : 0

New Type Internal Horn, New Type Amplifying Tone Arm with Ball-bearing Socket, 'His Master's Voice' No. 4 Sound Box, which is also entirely new in design. Cabinet of light construction, covered with black leather waterproof cloth, fitted with leather carrying handle and metal corners. Equipped with single spring motor, 10 in. turntable, playing records up to 12 in. in diameter, graduated speed regulator. Self-closing needle container for two kinds of needles.

*Provision is made for carrying 6 records in lid.*

Illustration by courtesy of Ruth Edge, EMI Music Archives



recently-introduced steel pillar-and-plate design also used on the 107, its successor the 103, the Nursery model and the Gramola.

The new portable met with wide acclaim (Compton Mackenzie "felt sorry for other portables"). It was streets ahead of any other portable then on the market, and the only fault that could be found was the tendency of the double needle container in the lid to vibrate at certain frequencies. By October 1926 this container had been removed, and the now-familiar quadrant in the front right-hand corner of the case had taken its place. (This meant that the winder escutcheon had to be fitted with the projecting 'ears' for the screws at the top and bottom, rather than left and right.)

The next and most important change was the side-wind arrangement. Because the case was much shallower than most gramophones, a normal crank at the side would have to have a very short 'throw' if the user's knuckles were to remain undamaged. The company's solution to this, in a patent of 9th April 1926, was to mount the winder at an angle. This also reduced the tendency of the whole machine to dance up and down as the winder was turned.

When the side-wind 101 first appeared in the shops is unclear: it was probably early in 1927. Another change made at about the same time was the blackening of the external fittings. They were still nickelled, but the nickel was chemically blackened. Bright nickel fittings lived on, however, on the coloured models introduced during 1927. These could be had in blue, grey or brown crocodile-grained leathercloth. Top of the range was the red leather version, but this had gold-plated fittings inside and out. Red leathercloth, with nickel fittings and morocco-grained, came in 1928, and the blue, brown and grey versions also reverted to morocco graining, probably about the same time. Green came later, probably in 1929.

The 59 motor, with its alloy frame and

steel dust cover, probably came in the autumn of 1927. Its main advantage over the earlier 425/410 motor was a longer mainspring.

The automatic brake did not appear on the 101 until 1930. Like the brakes by then well established on the cabinet and larger table grands, it was operated by the eccentric run-out groove of contemporary HMV records, but it was significantly different in its action. Instead of releasing a leather pad onto the rim of the turntable, the reverse movement of the lever caused a pawl to engage a friction ring on the turntable boss. The idea had been patented in June 1928, but apparently it was used on no other model. As the new brake left no room to store the winder on the motor board, new (and, incidentally, more robust) clips were devised for storing the winder in the lid.

The last 101s had yet another new motor. This reverted to an all-steel construction, and was basically the motor we now associate with the 102. Another change was the use of chromium rather than nickel for the internal fittings, and of mazak instead of brass even for the front of the No.4 soundbox. (The back had been of this metal for some time.) The self-destructive properties of this alloy mean that 100% original 101s of this late date (1931) are difficult to find.

Other variations that collectors may come across include the Tropical version in teak, assembled in Calcutta for local use but sometimes brought back by English families returning home. There was even a double-spring version, with gilt fittings, but this had its own model number - 112. There may also be leather coverings in colours other than red, made for exhibition or shop window display purposes.

I hope that these notes may be of help to members in dating 101s. Further clues are provided by the style of the model number label: this was discussed in The Hillandale News of August 1982.



# Letters

## The DBB Prefix

### COLUMBIA PREFIXES

I FEAR I HAVE committed a silliness beside which those listed in December (Oops!) pale into insignificance. Recent correspondence on Columbia Prefixes has been difficult enough to follow at the best of times. In his December letter Frank Andrews set out to clarify a few points. Exasperatingly, some seven words were omitted, making nonsense of his second paragraph. This was my mistake, and not that of our new proof-reader. Funnily enough it was not Frank who picked up the error, but Peter Adamson. Peter not only spotted that an omission had been made but managed, in his letter, to write the exact passage, word for word, which I had omitted. He also drew attention to a sentence of Frank's which could be read in two different and contradictory ways; he suggested adding three words to remove any possible ambiguity in the phrasing.

I am deeply apologetic, not only to poor Frank Andrews, but to all members who have been hopelessly confused by this daftness. And I am thankful to Peter Adamson, and full of admiration at his uncanny extra-sensory perception. I print below the relevant paragraph of Frank Andrews' letter, this time containing the words previously omitted *shown in italics* and with Peter's suggested insertion (shown in brackets).

"As regards the prefixes Columbia used for its British issues, it is my belief that the company, when it changed to its new system of numbering discs, commenced with prefixes for Britain which were absolutely in the logic of the whole system by numbering the light-blue labelled discs with *LBX* and the dark-blue labelled discs with *DBX* prefixes, thus following the logic of just simply adding (for 12" discs) an X to the prefixes used for the 10" discs, as was done with foreign catalogue labels, the British 10" discs being prefixed 'LB' and 'DB' respectively. The 'B' in those prefixes, without any doubt on my part, signified 'British'. For some still undiscovered reason, Columbia, although numbering a few of its first 12" British issues with *LBX* and *DBX* prefixes, changed its policy and omitted the middle 'B', thus leaving the British catalogue numbers in an anomalous state with the simple *LX* and *DX* prefixes."

There now follow two letters arising from other aspects of Frank Andrews' December letter, including the question of the DBB prefix. One of them is, again, from Peter Adamson.

Ted Cunningham, Editor

Dear Ted,

Frank Andrews writes that he still questions the existence of Columbias with DBB catalogue numbers. When this question was first raised some issues ago I wrote with details of a DBB I have. Here are the details again, which I hope will finally confirm that such records were actually issued: Columbia DBB5, Raymond Newell singing two songs: Kipling & McCall - "Boots" w.orch. (WA9847) London & de Rance: "The Journey's End" w.orch. (WA9848). I hope all doubts of the existence of DBBs are now expelled!

Regards, Chris Hamilton

■ Fife, Scotland, 4th December

### Columbia Prefixes (including DBBs!) and Stroboscopes

Dear Ted,

My letter on Columbia prefixes (October edition) illustrates how easily little details can cause confusion if not absolutely clearly presented. My list of label colours designed to show the use of the initial letters in number prefixes started life beginning: Dark-blue, Light-blue . . . (that is, with initials D and L). As it appeared in the magazine, it began: Dark-Blue, Light-Blue ... which so strongly suggests initials DB and LB as to rather undermine both the scheme I described and my later comments about DBB. In fact it is a mistake which could well account for the confusion at Columbia in 1930: someone might have thought it was intended to have DBB, DBBX and the other horrors (such as DBFX) I suggested before!

On my own part, having written the letter in a strictly non-logical order, I did manage to overlook my last-minute addition of the colour Claret to the list (with initial C) - which of course explains the "mystery" prefix CB.

Frank Andrews' more recent letter questions ONCE AGAIN the existence of records with the DBB prefix! I can't think why he is so reluctant to believe in them. Following my original query other collectors mentioned examples in their possession (Hillandale 144 June '85), and later even Frank himself reported





having discovered the allocation of numbers DBB1 to DBB19 (Hillandale 145 August '85). Certainly **someone** (even if only mistakenly) intended one of the **Bs** to stand for **Blue**! Perhaps a photograph of my own recently acquired DBB9 will finally convince him - and any other sceptics.

Peter Copeland's 'Playback' article on stroboscopes caused me to dig out some records of my own, including Great Scott records which Chris Hamilton has since mentioned. One oddity I came across was a couple of Kid-Kord children's records (which I take to be of British Homophone origin). They have coloured illustrative labels of larger than ordinary size. Around the edge of each label appears a stroboscopic design, which seems fair enough, according to the Hillandale article. Unfortunately the stroboscope **doesn't work**! Investigation reveals that the pattern has 81 sections instead of the 77 required for about 78 rpm with 50Hz mains. No record speed around 78 to 80 rpm corresponds to a sensible alternative to 50Hz as a mains frequency. In general, if  $r$  is the number of revolutions per minute, and  $f$  the mains frequency, then the pattern is illuminated  $120f$  times per minute (twice per cycle). For an apparently stationary pattern this must be the same rate as  $r$  times the number of pattern sections. In this case we have  $81r = 120f$ , and you can experiment yourself with a calculator.

Yours sincerely, Peter Adamson  
St. Andrews University, 11th December

Dear Ted,

First I should like to thank Chris Hamilton, who replied to my 'Playback' item about early non-Homophone stroboscope labels. The only 'Great Scott' record I've ever seen has a salmon-pink label printed in brown, with no stroboscope, but I can believe what Chris says. I certainly shot myself in the foot when I forgot about Decca's 'Music While You Work' series - that definitely counts! And, to make things worse, I shot myself in the other foot as well. I thought Decca's 'ffrr' frequency records K.1802-4 were the first with stroboscopes, completely forgetting their pre-ffrr test-disc EXP55. I can't date this exactly, but it is in the August 1938 catalogue. So I certainly fell down on this topic: my apologies to all concerned.

Secondly I would like to challenge your footnote to Paul Collette's query about the geometrical symbols after HMV matrix-numbers. A triangle means Western Electric, fair enough. But the 'swastika' does not come BETWEEN Western Electric and Blumlein. So far as HMV was concerned, they started almost together. To be pedantic, the 'swastika' is not the same as the symbol adopted by the Nazis a year or two later, but a mirror image of it, so on both chronological and symbolic grounds it is unlikely to have been eliminated because of its political overtones.

Matrix 2B2498-1, a piano solo by Artur Rubinstein, was the first 'swastika' recording I know of. It was made in Abbey Road Studio 3 on about 15th December 1931 (wax received at Hayes 19th December). Swastika recordings came from Studio 3 and Studio 1 over the next seven months, the last I can find being 2B2979-2, the last part of Menuhin's performance of the Elgar violin Concerto recorded on 15th July 1932 in Studio 1. But swastikas came only from one studio at a time. Meanwhile the other studios were emitting triangles and squares. In the mid-60s I telephoned someone at Hayes and asked what the swastika meant. I was told it meant 'Gramophone Company Recording System'. There is a British Patent No.372870 which seems to be the correct date and



provenance, and the performance of the system given in the patent specification agrees with what is recorded upon 'swastika' records, so I have always assumed that is the full explanation, although I have no proof. A second assumption now follows. To me, it seems that when EMI was trying to evade the Western Electric patent, they tried out both Columbia's Blumlein system and the Gramophone Company system in different Abbey Road studios. A square - a four-sided symbol - is the natural progression from a triangle, so was used for Blumlein. But the matrix-number engraving machine evidently had no way of drawing a pentagon, which would be the logical symbol for the Gramophone Company's system; so a sign made from existing stencils, using two long lines and four short lines, was used instead.

If we look at Patent 372870 we can even see why the Blumlein system succeeded over the Gramophone Company's cutter. In the latter the moving parts were reduced to the minimum by cementing the cutting stylus into the armature. If a cutter failed during a session there would have been a delay of some hours while the cement dried. I suspect this is the reason for the wax-tearing noises clearly audible in parts of the Tchaikovsky piano concerto (especially matrix 2B2914-1). Although I admit this is the third link in a chain of pure supposition without proof, I suggest that my story hangs together. I should very much like to KNOW the truth about 'swastika' records. Fortunately I can't shoot myself in the foot again as I don't have any feet left!

Yours sincerely, Peter Copeland  
Easton-in-Gordano, Bristol, 10th December

#### Basses and Baritones

Dear Mr. Cunningham,

I am researching English-speaking basses and baritones for a series of articles and, whilst I have much information on many singers, one or two are presenting difficulties. Despite intensive enquiries I can find little or no information on the basses Manuel Hemingway, Edward Halland and Reginald Whitehead, and the Australian baritone A.H. Gee. I have most of the records

made by these singers, but little or no biographical detail. Can any reader help, please? All replies will be gratefully acknowledged. I read with interest Michael Hegarty's letter referring to the visit to London of the Haydn Quartet in 1902. The Quartet's bass was W.F. (William Francis) Hooley. I have one of his 1902 G&Ts ('A Son of the Desert Am I') and some of his American recordings. Through the good offices of Quentin Riggs, California, I have some photographs of Hooley, and one of Harry McDonough, together with biographical details on Hooley. I am really enjoying the magazine. Long may it continue.

Yours sincerely, Graham Oakes  
Holywell, Clwyd, 16th November

#### Lenin's Speeches

Dear Mr. Cunningham,

I am interested in the history of Lenin's speeches 1919-1921. Sixteen speeches were pressed on records 'Zentropetschatj-Sovetskaya plastinka' in our factory METROPOL REKORD in Aprelevka near Moscow. (Today: MELODIA on the same place!) The last western factory closed by the Soviets was Pathé in Moscow 1919. Some of the Lenin speeches were pressed in this factory. I am very interested to know more about the last years of Pathé in the USSR. Can you help me? I send you my thanks in advance.

With best regards, Dr. Georg Moll

West Germany, 14th October

#### JOHN DALLIMORE

Dear Mr. Cunningham,

It is with great sadness that I write to inform you of the sudden death of my father, John Dallimore, on 22nd November at the age of 62.

Dad had been looking forward to enjoying his retirement searching out nice 'horners' or rare Caruso's, which were his love. Sadly it was not to be. However, he had enjoyed the recent A.G.M. at Malvern. I know father had many friends amongst your membership

Yours sincerely, P.C.A. Watson  
Portchester, Fareham, 2nd December



# SHACKLETON'S CYLINDER

REFERRING TO A.O. LEON-HALL'S "Cylinder Double" in the August "Hillandale": Shackleton's first Antarctic expedition was in 1907-9, not 1910 as stated. Which leads me to my query. At Howard Hope's meeting, Shackleton's "frighteningly breakable" cylinder was played. Presumably this is the Edison 4-minute wax cylinder 473. I gather from Roland Huntford's book "Shackleton" that this was recorded in New Zealand on 30th March 1909, when the explorer was returning from his expedition, although Huntford calls it a Blue Amberol: this is presumably a later issue of the material on the wax cylinder? However, George Frow (in "Hillandale" No.29, 1966) says it (473) was recorded in April or May 1910, probably in America, and wonders whether the HMV disc 01028 of Shackleton is a dubbing of the cylinder. The disc has the HMV matrix number 3160f, which I should date to mid-1909; and why should HMV use a dubbing from an Edison cylinder rather than a 'live' recording of a national hero? What IS the real history of the cylinder(s) and the disc?

Yours sincerely, George Taylor  
Harrogate, N.Yorks, 29th August 1989

## HOWARD HOPE'S REPLY

FIRSTLY, YES, Mr. Taylor is dead right; the expedition to which Shackleton refers is that of 1907 to 1909, and yes, I certainly did date the cylinder to 1910, following George Frow's writing on the subject. This, however, is not the answer to Mr. Taylor's fair question "What IS the real history of the recordings?"

The first thing seemed to be to get the cylinder out and play it again for clues, and yes, there is a clue in the very first line of Shackleton's stilted delivery . . . "Main results of the British South Polar Expedition of 1907 under my command are as follows . . ." Then, most interestingly, he actually gives the day, but NOT THE YEAR of the recording himself as he signs off . . . "I, Ernest Shackleton, have today, March the 30th, dictated this record.

The events recorded in the cylinder are harrowing indeed, and a terrible strain was put on the party who were daily in fear of their lives. Was this recording made immediately on his return, and had I mistaken the delivery of a mentally and physically shattered man for

that of a merely stiff one? Maybe so, if the March referred to was March 1909. But where in New Zealand were there facilities to professionally record Edison cylinder records, particularly four minute ones? Frank Andrews doubts that there were any. Huntford probably mistook his information, and incidentally, no Blue dubbing or original was recorded of this subject.

473 is an American issue number, and dealer bulletin No.48 of April 1910 introduces us to the cylinder with the news that Shackleton was just about to undertake a major speaking tour of US cities after receiving the prestigious Cullen Geographical Medal in the States on 28th March 1910. It seems, therefore, that the cylinder was recorded in New York two days after the presentation, to coincide with the tour's launch. Shackleton must have agreed to the recording previously, so the publicity must have been prepared for printing before the recording was actually made. According to Roger Thorne there was also a Victor record made in New York at the same time.



What, then, of HMV 3160f, "The Dash for the South Pole"? I am indebted to Ruth Edge at EMI Archives for a very complete answer. That recording was made on 23rd June 1909, under Gaisberg's direction. There is a photograph in the Archives of the Great Man at the recording horn; also correspondence surrounding the invitation to record, and interest in the product from dealers.

Ruth even kindly went to the trouble of making a cassette of the record to allow a comparison of the texts. They are completely different: only the dreadful delivery stays the same. It is so nervous that he even has to correct himself after mentioning the wrong Pole, the North one, at one stage! It only goes to show how easily a horn sticking out of a wall could reduce a national hero to a nervous, awkward individual.

According to the record, Winter Camp was not reached until 1st March 1909, and Shackleton, having been approached in London by HMV in mid-June of that same year, had agreed to come in at short notice. However, his insistence, shown in the letter from HMV to an Australian dealer (right), that the record should not be released until after his meeting with Royalty at the Albert Hall in early July 1909, suggests that, as a good Englishman,

he would not have committed himself to an American company earlier, even had the chance arisen, in the fourteen weeks, at most, that it took him to sail home.

\*\*\*\*\*

June 24-1909

Messrs. S. Hoffnung & Co. Ltd.  
102 Fore Street

Dear Sirs,

In further reference to your letter of the 18th inst. regarding Lt. Shackleton, we now have pleasure in informing you that this gentleman visited our Laboratory here yesterday, and made a record descriptive of his expedition. He was at the same time photographed in the act of making the record, so that we are in possession of these two very interesting features connected with his personality and his achievement.

We have, however, had to agree to his strict condition that no use in any possible way is to be made of either the record or the photograph until after his Albert Hall Lecture (or address of some sort) which we understand he is to give next week, and at which Royalty will be present. After this, however, the record and the photographs will be available, and we will see that you receive copies immediately. Yours truly,

THE GRAMOPHONE COMPANY LIMITED

City of London Phonograph & Gramophone Society

## London Meetings

at the Bloomsbury Institute, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2, on Tuesdays at 7.00 p.m.

[RVAS] indicates a meeting of the Recorded Vocal Arts Society, for which there is an attendance fee of £1.50 including coffee.

20th February [CLPGS]

Gordon Bromly: HISTORIC RECORDS ON CD

27th February [RVAS]

Larry Lustig: THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY

13th March [RVAS]

Alan Blyth: TREASURES FROM MY COLLECTION

20th March [CLPGS]

Chris Hamilton: THE GRAMOPHONE AS AN HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

27th March [RVAS]

Denis Page: FOLLOW MY LIEDER

10th April [RVAS]

Richard Nicholson: MAINLY MOZART

17th April [CLPGS]

Charles Levin: subject to be announced

## CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

### BRANCH SECRETARIES

EAST FIFE

E.J. Goodall, [REDACTED]

SEVERN VALE

Lawrie Wilson, [REDACTED]

MIDLANDS

G. Burton, [REDACTED]

NEWCASTLE

(Clockwork Music Group)  
P. Bailey, [REDACTED]

YORKSHIRE

(The Northern Gramophone & Phonograph Group)  
J.W. Astin, [REDACTED]

VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

C. Gracie, [REDACTED]



# PLAYBACK

by Peter Copeland

**I**N A RECENT 'HILLDALE NEWS' I wondered about British Homophone's '4-in-1' records. There is another aspect of these which has puzzled me. First, let me define a technical term. A "scroll" is the name given to a deliberate coarsening of the groove-pitch of a disc recording, so as to provide a silent but visible gap on the record; it is normally used on LPs to separate different titles on the same side. But in the case of '4-in-1' the two tunes on each side were not marked by a 'scroll', although scrolls were used on the roughly-contemporary 'Broadcast Four-Tune' and 'Durium' records. Instead the groove DEPTH was increased. Because this left a smaller proportion of horizontal 'land' to reflect light, the result was a dark band which could be picked out if someone wanted to play only the second tune. Was this caused by the lack of a pitch mechanism on Homophone's cutting machine? Or, as with Homophone's stroboscope, were there patent implications?

So far as I am aware, the first use of a 'scroll' was by the Odeon company in 1908. Odeon patented the idea to deal with the problem of piracy in Eastern European countries. Some firms were acquiring commercial records of well-known artists, rendering them electrically conductive (usually by painting the surface with black-lead), and electroplating them to form fresh metal stampers from which illicit copies could be pressed. By patenting the scroll in the days before there was copyright protection, Odeon hoped to catch pirates who might be re-pressing their recordings, and they advertised the feature in the trade press to prevent duplication of their 'Jumbo' records. The scroll was therefore a patent indelible mark, rather

than a device for indicating the break between two songs.

In about 1912 'Encore' records appeared. These comprised two short tunes on each side, recorded at different sessions upon the same wax at different diameters. Initially the two recordings were not connected, but afterwards a linking groove was added to carry the playback needle from the end of the first tune into the beginning of the second. Personally I don't call this a 'scroll' since the grooves were not continuous, but clearly the device serves the same purpose. It also appears on Parlophone E10037 (issued in October 1923) separating two of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words".

What was the first appearance of the scroll in the modern sense of the word? It seems remarkably difficult to find early examples; perhaps the Odeon patent was casting long shadows! The earliest which comes to my mind is the French Language Course on HMV, recorded by Monseieur E.M. Stéphan. Some of this was recorded as early as 10th May 1923, but the complete set didn't appear until October 1927 on HMV C.1353 onwards. The earlier acoustically-recorded lessons were dubbed electrically, and this resulted in the earliest conventional scrolls I know of. Other HMVs, for example "Instruments of the Orchestra" on C.1311 recorded in December 1926 and published in March 1927, have 'locked grooves' which means the needle does not pass automatically from one band to the next.

I can't help thinking I've missed something. If any member can tell me about an earlier 'scroll' this would be of great historical significance. Remember, my definition means (a) the original groove should have been cut continuously, and (b) that it served the purpose of separating two titles.

## This is The Last Hilldale News

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Please return the enclosed renewal slip with your subscription as soon as possible

Our Treasurer will then sign the slip and return it to you as acknowledgement



# London Meetings

by Daniel Whellans

**O**UR SEPTEMBER SPEAKER needed no introduction because, poor chap, he never turned up. Colin Johnson was struck down by a sudden and dramatic Kentish pestilence on the morning of the day he was due at Bloomsbury. He spent the next day or two with high temperature and low morale, but hopes to fare better at his second try on 16th January, when we hope to learn the significance of his chosen title, "Go Forth and Multiply". His Bloomsbury audience overcame their disappointment and listened instead to a recording of the address given to the Society by Robert Parker at the 1987 Hatfield symposium.

In October, Peter Martland's address was inspired by an observation, made by a recording artist of some 60 years' standing, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, that the gramophone was "an art in time". Once a performance is committed to disc, time no longer exists: performances are frozen and preserved: past styles of performance can be heard and analysed as never before. The gramophone has been the first means of bringing the performances of the great, and the not-so-great, into Everyman's home. One great impact the gramophone had on established musical convention was the introduction of jazz in the early twenties. Classically trained musicians tried to cope with the new music in order to retain audiences, but there was a divergence of the popular and the classical, a gap which widened during the inter-war period. Still trying to cope, classical musicians recorded popular items. We heard John McCormack sing "Sonny Boy", Richard Tauber "Jealousy", Peter Dawson "Rolling Along", Caruso "Over There", and a comic imitation of cockney by Lawrence Tibbett in "On the Road to Mandaleye" (where the flying fishes ply).

Other aspects explored were the transience of musical taste (styles now frowned upon but which can be heard still through the medium of the gramophone); and the merciless preservation of performances by artists

past their prime. In fairness, recordings of their good performances were played, and we heard Adelina Patti, Alma Gluck, Clara Butt, Galli-Curci, and Elisabeth Schumann.

We look forward to future talks from our Chairman, but with due respect to him and to all the fine speakers who honoured us during 1989, the most memorable meeting of the year was surely December's visit by Allen Debus of Chicago University. Apart from his interesting subject matter and expert delivery, we were guests of the British Library National Sound Archive. The large room they put at our disposal proved only just adequate: more and more people arrived, eventually having to stand in the doorway. Professor Debus took as his theme the many British Music Hall artists who toured the United States and enjoyed success there in Vaudeville. Who would have supposed that Albert Chevalier's cockney humour would wow them in America? Yet he was paid (raved a New York paper) "more than Henry Irving ever dreamed of", \$25,000 for ten weeks: (8 weeks work and two weeks crossing and recrossing the Atlantic, paid as though he were working!). George Lashwood took the States by storm and cut records in New York. Wilkie Bard failed at first but, just in time, succeeded in getting his act together. Two ladies who impersonated gentlemen were highly rated: Vesta Tilley made no American recordings but her 10 English-made Edison cylinders were released there during her 1894 tour. Hetty King's act in one theatre lasted 32 minutes including encores. Across America, Vaudeville (unlike the low-class, bawdy English Music Hall) was seen as good clean family entertainment: Marie Lloyd failed to charm, her material far too risqué. (They weren't too sure about George Lashwood at times!). But Marie's sister Alice, not rated highly here, was a Star in the USA. All these artists enjoyed good record sales during their US tours, but deletions followed rapidly upon their departures. The exception was Harry Lauder, with whom American audiences enjoyed a long love affair. He made no fewer than 25 successful US tours, and his records were always very successful in the United States. They may be still!



# Record Reviews

## FOUR RECORDS FROM THE BBC "VINTAGE COLLECTION"

1. **Solomon/Giesekeing.** The recordings on this LP are some of the finest on record, made before the widespread introduction of electronic jiggery-pokery transformed the wonderfully vivid thirties sound (particularly of English recordings) into the rather 'canned' acoustic of the forties and onwards. Both pianists are in excellent form and give clean exhilarating performances with great pace and style, two qualities badly needed for an LP entirely devoted to such heavy Romantic repertoire. A little more variety might have been introduced into the programme. Tchaikowsky and Liszt together with Franck give a slightly one-sided view of the two pianists' art, especially that of Solomon, whose finest interpretations were to be found in the Classical repertoire. Nevertheless he brings terrific grandeur to the Liszt encores and to the main work also. Giesekeing's authoritative Franck reminds us of his French origins, often forgotten in the popular conception of him as a German. As far as the transfers go, there is a good and a bad side to them. The copies used, and the Noise Reduction techniques employed, produce very good results. However, the equalisation settings - that is, the boosting, cutting and relative balance of parts of the musical register - are basically suited to LP recordings, not to recordings of the 1920s and 30s. Hence the top part of the musical range is overly truncated and the lower regions are disproportionately boosted. This gives the acoustic a 'bottom-heavy' slightly dull sound. A little time spent comparing the original 78s (easy to come by) reminds one just how bright and lifelike they really sounded. Transfers like this, handed down to future generations, may be superficially more acceptable to their ears but they will confirm the widely held but mistaken impression that 'those old 78 things' are either dull and lifeless or noisy and scratchy. However, I compliment the BBC on the liner notes, some of the most comprehensive I have seen in a long time on both artist and composer.

Charles Levin

SOLOMON: Tchaikowsky Piano Concerto No.1 (c.1929, with Hallé Orchestra conducted by Hamilton Hart). Liszt: Au bord d'une source; Study in F minor ("La leggerezza"); Rákóczy March (c.1933).

WALTER GIESEKING, London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Henry Wood: César Franck, Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra (1931).

BBC ENTERPRISES LP REH 718; Cassette ZCF 718; Compact Disc BBC CD 718.

2. **Mischa Elman.** Like the Solomon/Giesekeing record, this one contains a classic performance of a staple of the Romantic repertoire. Tchaikowsky wrote his violin concerto for Mischa Elman's teacher, Leopold Auer. However, Auer refused it, calling it 'unplayable', and the première was given by Adolf Brodsky. Two of Auer's pupils, Elman and Heifetz, made the concerto central to their repertoires, but played it very differently. Elman's was the more stately, grand version and this, his first recording of the work, shows that quality to great advantage. I confess to being an ardent devotee of the Heifetz camp, yet I always enjoy listening to Elman's version. It is majestic yet still lively, a difficult thing to achieve. Elman is always exciting, no matter how intense the music: his magnificent tone sustains the interest apart from the breadth of his musical concept. Regrettably my comments on the transfer characteristic of the Solomon/Giesekeing recording apply equally here. Again the sound is bottom-heavy, and it lacks the edge that really should bring it alive. The Beethoven Romance that fills up the disc is a good choice: a fine performance, although perhaps a little cumbersome: Beethoven takes less easily to this treatment than Tchaikowsky. Again, the BBC provides unusually fine sleeve notes, this time by Joseph Seiger, Elman's long-time accompanist of his later years. They are very revealing and quite touching: it is always fascinating when one is allowed a glimpse 'behind the scenes'. As for Seiger's comments on the recording itself, I entirely concur with his praise of the 'live, vibrant, luscious tone'. Finally, I applaud the Beeb for continuing to produce these items on LP.

Charles Levin

MISCHA ELMAN: Tchaikowsky, Violin Concerto in D, with London Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli (1929)

Beethoven, Romance in G for violin and orchestra, conducted by Lawrence Collingwood (1933)

BBC ENTERPRISES LP REH 717; Cassette ZCF 717; Compact Disc BBC CD 717

3. **Opera Volume 1.** The selections are taken from the period 1927-1936; the artists are drawn from the cream of inter-war singers: and what a cream. We have Gigli, Rethberg and Pinza in the Trio from "Attila"; Lauri-Volpi singing an aria from "Andrea Chenier"; Toti dal Monte with an aria from "The Pearl Fishers"; Hedy and Journet in the duet from "Thais", and the incomparable Bjorling with Recondita Armonia from "Tosca". Also Ruziczka and Kipnis (Herr Kavalier); Josef Schmidt (M'appari, "Martha"); Stabile (Deh, vieni alla finestra, "Don Giovanni"); Ponselle and Pinza ("La Forza del Destino"); Domgraf-Fassbaender ("Marriage of Figaro"); Tibbett ("Il Barbiere di Siviglia"); Thill ("Le Cid"); Muzio (Tacea la notte placida,



"Il Trovatore"); Crooks (In fernem Land, "Lohengrin"); and Chaliapin (La calunnia, "Il barbiere"). The performances are without exception superb. In particular I found Josef Schmidt's "M'appari" and Richard Crooks' "In fernem Land" inspiring. With such a galaxy of stars it is impossible, given space limitations, to critically assess each track. What can be assessed is the transfer engineering. In this volume and in the one reviewed below the remastering engineer, Paul Gilham, has evidently tried to give us as much as possible of what was originally laid down in the grooves of the old 78s. He has succeeded, although some tracks were somewhat "bathroomy". I felt I could discern in several tracks the inadequacies of the original recording studios. I was on occasion disturbed by the narrowness of sound, and at times a distressing tinniness. Comparing several tracks against my own 78s I found the problems on some of these tracks present on the originals, but masked by the surface noise. When listening to transfers of this nature we will have to get used to the inadequacies of the original recordings. What I describe does not prevent me from commending this record to you.

Peter Martland

OPERA VOLUME 1. Items as listed above. BBC ENTERPRISES LP REH 715, Cassette ZCF 715, Compact Disc BBC CD 715

4. Operetta Volume 1. Some people look down their noses at Operetta, dismissing performers of that genre as lightweights who would never survive the rigours of the operatic stage. To them I offer this album: they will be amazed at the versatility, power and talent of the singers on it. That should not be too surprising for most of them were also great opera singers during the inter-war years. Schmidt ("Der Zigeunerbaron", Als flotter Geist") Ivogun ("Die Fledermaus" Klänge der Heimat); Patzak ("Eine Nacht in Venedig", Komm in die Gondel); Husch ("Zar und Zimmermann", Sonst spielt ich mit Zepter und Kron). Schöne sings from "Fledermaus", Wittrisch from "Frederike", and together with Frind and Strienz, "Der Bettelstudent". For the rest we must thank Richard Tauber, Lotte Lehmann and friends, who provide us with a delightful vision of inter-war Vienna with extracts from "Zigeunerbaron", "Die Fledermaus" and "Schön ist die Welt". They have a whale of a time making relaxed and sophisticated music. One can almost hear the chink of the champagne glasses. On some tracks the orchestral accompaniment is dreadful. I checked the pages of *The Gramophone* for contemporary reviews and was interested to discover that the reviewer, on more than one occasion, rebuked the poor standard of orchestral playing and recording. That said, I recommend this volume to you.

Peter Martland

OPERETTA VOLUME 1. Items as listed. BBC ENTERPRISES LP REH 716, Cassette ZCF 716, Compact Disc BBC CD 716

## ANCORA PRIMA VOCE Great Singers 1909-1938 Martinelli

I HAVE JUST BOUGHT a cordless telephone and (in order to review these two new issues from Nimbus) a CD player. I have a microwave oven, video tape recorder, Sony Walkman, and both food and word processors. However, if I had to choose between all this electrical wizardry and my EMG Mark IX the EMG would win hands down. So, I felt especially proud comparing some tracks from these new CDs with my own original records. I have been told on authority that Nimbus have been cranking up their borrowed EMG, hanging a number of microphones in front of the horn, giving their thorns an extra sharp cut and compiling these well chosen selections. It is odd therefore that the accompanying booklets and covers say they have been using a "Digital Ambisonic Recording" process in conjunction with 78 discs. Do they feel bound to invoke a convincing-sounding name for what is a charming and honest collaboration between a gramophone of the past and recording gear of the present?

Anyway, the Nimbus achievement is impressive. Of the two CDs I most enjoyed GREAT SINGERS. Galli-Curci's "Son vergin vezzosa", Ponselle's "Casta Diva", Turner's "In questa Reggia", and Supervia's Habañera provide us with a universe of operatic excellence made more tantalizing because it exists only through shellac, in the past.

The Martinelli CD is immensely enjoyable too. It covers a recording period between October 1915 and January 1928 and demonstrates the man's talent when his voice was at its best. Along with the standard repertoire (Traviata, Aida, Forza, and bits of Cav. and Pag.) there are two arias from Andrea Chénier and one from Iris. Michael Scott in his book *The Record of Singing* mentions Martinelli's habit of "forcing" his voice with too much breath pressure. There may be hints of this in the later items on this CD, but overall the compilation demonstrates Martinelli's stylish technical skill and spirited personality.

David Sulkin

GREAT SINGERS 1909. NIMBUS RECORDS "Prima Voce" Compact Disc NI 7801. Tetrizzini, Caruso, Schumann-Heink, McCormack, Galli-Curci, Stracciari, Ponselle, Lauri-Volpi, Turner, Tibbett, Supervia, Gigli, Anderson, Schipa and Favero, Muzio, Tauber. Total playing time 75 minutes 12 seconds.

GIOVANNI MARTINELLI. NIMBUS RECORDS "Prima Voce" Compact Disc NI 7804. Arias from Cavalleria Rusticana, Ernani, Iris, La Traviata, Eugene Onegin, Guglielmo Tell, Aida, Fedora, Andrea Chénier (2), La Forza del Destino (3), Pagliacci (2), Il Trovatore. Total playing time 76 minutes 32 seconds.



## THE SCOTS GUARDS' BAND

by George Frow

IN THESE INFLATIONARY TIMES army bandmasters get commissioned straight up to Captain. Lieutenant Fred Wood laboured on for 28 years with the Scots Guards and I believe he came out still as a Lieutenant, although Hassell of the Irish Guards with an identical span managed to get his captaincy in the end. At the same time Wood's experience and expertise were generally recognised and he was appointed senior director of music at Wembley in 1924, and carried weight over other bands performing there.

The Vintage Light Music Society always comes up with unique compilations of orchestras and bands of pre-electric days with no tricks or claims for cleaned-up sound, as in most cases the original records are in good condition for their age. Here there are several worn sides, but there has been no attempt to juggle with the knobs to cover clicks and swish, and the answer lies with the listener's controls. The Mill on the Cliff is one that might have been left off because the sound is scrawny, but it is a rarely heard overture and the temptation to include it must have prevailed for that reason. Also the uncommon pieces "Two Hindoo Pictures" are worn unfortunately, but will be new to just about everybody. In the second movement there is a plaintive instrumentation that reminds one of a tropical animal in the night.

The notes relate that the Scots Guards played at the Burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. Probably they took part but the Grenadiers are credited on the commemorative record later issued. Rimmer's march for the occasion is played here but, like many of his marches, there was not enough originality to sustain it in the repertoire.

Readers who enjoy light music and off-the-beaten-track show music of long ago will find plenty of tunes played sensitively here, as well as forays into ragtime and dance music. Very few of the items offered here are now available on record.

**Cassette:** BAND OF H.M. SCOTS GUARDS conducted by Lt. F.W. Wood (records from 1910-1922).

Standard Bearer March (Fahrbach); The Bells Waltz (Partridge); Overture- The Mill on the Cliff (Reissiger); April Showers, foxtrot (Silvers); Two Hindoo Pictures (Hansen, arr.Lotter); Joyland Selection (Darewski); The Bells of St.Malo (Rimmer); Sussex by the Sea (Ward Higgs); Valse Royale (Partridge); Forget Me Not Intermezzo (H. Richards); Little Miss Ragtime, selection of 8 items; Love in Arcady (Haydn Wood); Hobomoko (E. Reeves); The Marriage Market, selection (V.Jacoby); The Unknown Warrior March (Rimmer).

OBTAINABLE FROM: VINTAGE LIGHT MUSIC SOCIETY, [redacted] West Wickham, Kent BR4 9DJ. Price £2.75 (Overseas £3.00)

## Book Review

### NORWEGIAN DISCOGRAPHIES No.3 REX RECORDS

by George Frow

ALTHOUGH INTENDED AS a Norwegian-pressed domestic record to counter the heavy customs duties on discs imported from Sweden, this Rex label expanded its catalogue with further British and American masters coming through Kristall Schallplatten in Berlin. Our own Rex records were, of course, started by British Crystalate in September 1933, and the Norwegian label was marketed some 14 months later, and survived for just four years, although after that date slow-moving stocks made for a fading-away. There are quite a few artists common to both Rexes: Larry Adler, Casani Club Orchestra, Charlie Kunz, Jack Payne, Jay Wilbur, Billy Cotton, Primo Scala and Troise, to name some, and of course those American dance bands under various noms-de-disque. Several of these Norwegian records included commercial plugs, the first I have met apart from the obvious give-aways, but this may have been common practice in several countries, and left out of my education.

In preparing the catalogue Tom Valle was able to visit the concern who made the records, Elektrist Bureau, a pioneering company specialising in telephone equipment and still very much in business, and was permitted to take those catalogues and advertising material he needed - a desirable situation indeed. The records had disappeared unfortunately, some of them going into new records during the War. Others were used in unsuccessful insulating experiments during the 1950s.

Those who have the two earlier catalogues in this series will know how detailed they are, and although the language of presentation is naturally Norwegian, there are introductions in English and German, and you don't have to be much of a linguist to read the titles and get the line of the advertisements. British readers will find a number of old friends in these pages, and such catalogues serve to remind us that we could do with a new printing of some of the Jim Hayes catalogues.

I understand further work on other Norwegian issues is making good progress, and the compilers have made a good job of this one.

NORWEGIAN DISCOGRAPHIES No.3: REX RECORDS Tom Valle and Arild Bratteland. Size A4, c.70 pages with illustrations. Price £12 post paid from Tom Valle, [redacted] Oslo 10, Norway. Sterling cheques accepted.



# In The Saleroom

Christie's South Kensington 30/11/89

by Christopher Proudfoot

A notable feature of recent sales has been the high level of interest (largely Japanese in origin) in horns made of wood or papier-mache. The November sale included no less than four E.M.G.s and prices ranged from £800 for a Mark IX with a sagging horn through £1200 for another with the horn much as it left the works, up to £2,200 for a very sound-looking Xa with electric motor. The fourth, which made £1,100, was the rarest of the quartet: an early, transitional Mark VIII/X, with the horn mounted in the rear left corner of the motor board and a three-quarter-width lid that more-or-less covered the turntable without fouling the horn. The latter was of Mark XA size and shape, but the plated sondo box (later than the machine) suggested that an updating had taken place at some time, and it may be that the original horn was a Wilson Panharmonic.

Wood horns have always been expensive, and this was emphasised on this occasion by the £850 (Plus VAT) paid for a post-1913 oak-cased Zonophone which happened to have acquired a full-sized (22in. diam.) HMV mahogany horn. Assuming that the same machine with an ordinary metal horn would be unlikely to exceed £350, that's £500 just for the horn. A Fireside phonograph with an oak Music Master horn (one of its joints coming apart) made £1,300, an interesting comparison with the £600 paid in August for one with a metal Cygnet. That had no lid (a factor which usually does phonograph prices no good), but it was the rarely seen Model B Fireside. What effect this last has on the value is difficult to determine; rare it may be, but it differs from Model A only in that the gears are permanently fixed in the four-minute state: hardly an inestimable advantage.

The gramophone section was dominated by horn models imported recently from India. These botched,

battered bitsers are always recognizable even with the current proliferation of made-up horn gramophones, but few made less than £200 and one, with a spectacular quadruple-spring Swiss motor in glazed case made £480. Almost as much (£400) was achieved by a bog-standard European anonymous, its horn painted to look like wood. What singled it out from almost every other horn gramophone in the sale was its 100% originality. By comparison, a mahogany Monarch Junior (included in the 1908 New Zealand catalogue which older members may recall as the 'Doric') brought only £320. The horn was a shortened brass phonograph horn and the elbow was also a replacement, although well done. It is evident that the price of horn gramophones depends on visual appeal rather than rarity. Many, after all, end up as pieces of decor in yuppie houses rather than in collections.

The same market seems to be responsible for the upwardly mobile price of portables. Black 101s leapt from £40 in August to £60 in November, and 102s are nudging the £100 (yuppies want something to play their Glen Miller records on, and prefer the 102). Coloured versions of either model are well into three figures; two blue 102s were in this sale, at £130 and £180. Both were in good condition, and the difference in price seems to contradict all that I have just said, for the 180-pounder was an early example, with the No. 16 soundbox, although not quite early enough to have the servo-assisted brake of the first 102s. However, a black 1920s Decca 1 made £80, and so did an early, brown-cloth No. 2 with its original Dulcephone soundbox. In terms of rarity and collectability, if there is such a word, the brown one should have been worth about twice as much as the black. Happily, it went to a collector, a CLPGS member.

*Prices quoted above do not include the 10% Buyer's Premium*



# HERE & THERE

## SEVERN VALE CELEBRATION

**A**BOUT 25 MEMBERS from various parts of the country attended a meeting in Cirencester on 17th December, to celebrate 21 years of the Group and 70 years of the Society. The meeting was chaired by John Calvert and was graced by the presence of the Mayor of Cirencester, Councillor Mrs. Mavis Marshall.

Entertainment was provided by Peter Dempsey, tenor, who sang some favourite ballads and operatic arias. Peter works for BBC Enterprises, and gave a demonstration of digitally re-mastered tapes, LPs and CDs. The able pianist Guy Roland, a Billy Mayerl enthusiast, played several unfamiliar Mayerl compositions, and some Chopin. A baritone as well as a pianist, Guy Roland sang a highly amusing B.C. Hilliam song, "Is he an Aussie, Lizzie, eh?"

Tea and cakes were provided, and there was a small display of talking machines and Society books. A very entertaining afternoon.

Len Watts

\* \* \*

## A SADLER'S WELLS PRESENTATION Can you help ?

**O**NE OF OUR long-standing members, David Sulkin, works with the English National Opera at the London Coliseum, where he is co-producer of The Baylis Programme. There he helps to oversee their Opera-in-Focus events. The next season begins in September, and David plans to present an O-in-F event concerning the Sadler's Wells Opera, with particular emphasis on their pre-war history. David has in mind especially such singers as Edith Coates, Tudor Davies, Norman Allin, Sumner Austin, May Blyth, Marjorie Parry, Heddle Nash, Miriam Licette, Walter Widdop and Gervase Elwes, all of whose best work is well represented on record. He would be glad to hear from anybody who can help by providing good original records of these

artists, to be played at the actual presentation at The Coliseum. If there should be any members who were regular habitués of the Sadler's Wells Opera before, or even during, the war, and who would be willing to get up and talk about their memories of the performances, then David would certainly be glad to hear from them. It seems likely that the presentation might also include films of the Company rehearsing before the war. If any members are able to help in any way, would they kindly contact:

David Sulkin,  
The Baylis Programme,  
English National Opera,  
London Coliseum,  
[REDACTED]  
London WC2N 4ES  
[REDACTED]

When further details of this Opera-in-Focus event are available, and a date, members will be notified in case they would like to attend. If, that is, there are any left who are not up there on the stage.

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[REDACTED]  
Ormskirk, Lancs.

Telephone: [REDACTED]



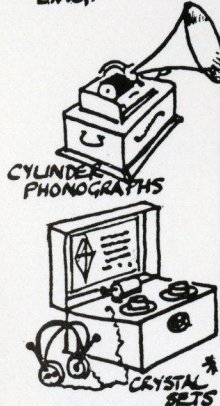


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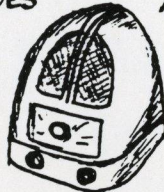
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